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City-Cowley County
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October 2, 2020

A message to the Cowley County Community;

2020 has been a year focused on protecting community health. The SARS-CoV2 virus (COVID-19) has fundamentally changed the way we live. We've endured outbreaks, quarantines, shutdowns, and shortages. We've stayed home, kept our distance, washed our hands and worn masks. We've seen people get sick and recover and we've sadly said final farewells to community members who have died. We've endured rumors, gossip and politics. We've been patient and kind but also have grown short-tempered and frustrated. What began for us in March is still affecting us in October and sadly we know that this will not stop anytime soon.

With summer past we are entering the "next phase" of the pandemic response as fall and winter loom ahead. Shorter periods of daylight translate to longer times spent indoors. Gathering in confined spaces combined with colder weather results in greater risk for contracting seasonal illness like colds and the flu. Each year we ask you to take precautions to protect yourself from seasonal influenza – this year doing that has increased importance attached to it.

We currently have no protection against COVID-19, a vaccine is coming but not soon enough. The good news is that we do have a vaccine that helps prevent influenza. Health care providers are going to be overwhelmed in the weeks and months ahead as cold and flu viruses begin to circulate. We will be required to test individuals that become ill to determine if they have COVID-19 or another virus like the flu. This type of widescale diagnostic response has not occurred before but will be necessary. Staying well will be everyone's priority.

We need your help. Please get vaccinated against influenza and the dangerous illnesses that it can lead to (pneumonia). The flu vaccine is proven safe and it is easy to obtain and it may save you, your family, your co-workers and your community from taking ill and having to quarantine for 14 days or more in the weeks and months ahead. Vaccines to prevent pneumonia are available for older adults and you should speak to your doctor to see if it is advised for you.

The flu shot won't make you sick it's proven to help you stay well. Continue to follow the basic prevention steps we've recited all year.

Stay home and away from others if you feel ill.

Socially distance yourself from others.

Wear a protective face covering if you can to protect yourself and others.

Cover your cough or sneeze.

Wash your hands often.

If you feel ill contact your doctor or the Health Department and get tested for the flu or COVID-19.

Please don't take risks with your health this flu season– get your flu shot today.

Stay Well,

Thomas Langer
Cowley County Public Health Officer
City-Cowley County Health Department